

Crop Insurance News

Apple MPCCI Signup Date Approaching

Growers considering apple multiple peril crop (MPCI) insurance for the first time must apply for coverage by November 20th. Current policyholders likewise have until November 20 to make any changes to their existing contracts. Crop insurance provides effective protection against losses due to natural perils and adverse weather, such as hail, excess moisture, and drought.

Apple producers can select from various quality options and price elections (up to \$11.30 per bushel) to develop an optimum risk management plan for their operations, based on their average yields. Plantings of apple varieties adapted to New Hampshire are insurable the first year after production reaches at least 150 bushels per acre. An orchard inspection may be required before coverage begins. Grower's can elect coverage levels up to 75% of the farm's average yield. In addition, an option can be added to a policy to protect against reduction in fruit quality due to hail damage.

All apple acreage in the county on the date coverage begins defines the basic, insurable farm unit. However, a grower may choose to divide apple acreage into optional units for insurance purposes provided the acreage is not contiguous, differs with respect to irrigation practices, or is planted to different varietal groups.

Longtime apple grower and new owner of Carter Hill Orchard in Concord, Rob Laroque has this to say about apple crop insurance:

"For a farmer starting out, crop insurance is an absolute necessity. It's the best investment you can make. I'd never be without crop insurance again."

Apple crop insurance is a regulated and subsidized by the Federal government. MPCCI insurance policies are available through private insurance agents. For a list of crop insurance agents in your area, contact the local USDA Farm Service Agency office or log on to the following Risk Management Agency web site: <http://www3.rma.usda.gov/tools/agents/>

Keep in mind that insurance agents are usually inundated with questions as the sales closing date approaches. If you plan on applying for an Apple MPCCI policy, call an agent well before November 20th. By contacting your agent early will guarantee you time to review and select the best protection for your farm operation.